Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 06875 101400Z

43
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 SS-15 DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 MC-02 OMB-01 EB-07 TRSE-00 AID-05 IGA-02

NEAE-00 /054 W
---------- 071435
P R 101248Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1480
SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6875

SECDEF FOR ASD/ISA-DSAA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, MASS, LE
SUBJECT: ASSISTANCE FOR LEBANESE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES

REF: (A) BEIRUT 2061 (DTG 05145Z MAR 76), (B) STATE 074800
(DTG 271704Z MAR 76)

1. SUMMARY: THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE LEBANESE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES HAS REQUESTED 6,000 COMPLETE SETS OF UNIFORMS FROM THE USG. EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE WE SHOULD GRANT THIS REQUEST AT THIS TIME. HOWEVER, THIS REQUEST DOES RAISE QUESTION OF WHAT ASSISTANCE WE SHOULD BE CONSIDERING FOR LEBANON. END SUMMARY.

2. HISHAM SHA'AR, DIRECTOR GENERAL, INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES (ISF) CALLED ON DATT 6 AUGUST WITH REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE GRANT OF 5-6,000 COMPLETE SETS OF FIELD UNIFORMS, TO INCLUDE BOOTS.

3. SHA'AR EXPLAINED THAT HE WAS SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF PRIMIN KARAME AND INTERIOR MINISTER CHAMOUN AND THAT THE UNIFORMS WERE NEEDED AT ONCE TO COUNTER
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 06875 101400Z

JUNBLATT'S EFFORTS TO TAKE OVER ADMINISTRATIVE

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

CONTROL OF WEST BEIRUT. HE REITERATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT RECENTLY PROCLAIMED POLITICAL COUNCIL OF LEFTIST NATIONAL MOVEMENT WAS DOMINATED BY COMMUNISTS AND THEIR SYMPATHIZERS, IMPLYING THAT IT WOULD BE DISASTROUS FOR LEBANON IF THEY WERE ALLOWED TO ESTABLISH SECURITY IN WEST BEIRUT.

4. WHEN ASKED WHETHER HE WOULD BE ABLE TO GATHER 5,000 GENDARMES AT PRESENT TIME, SHA'AR ANSWERED THAT HIS HQ IN EAST BEIRUT WAS STILL FUNCTIONING AND THAT MANY CHRISTIAN OFFICERS WERE COMING TO WORK DAILY. HE HIMSELF CROSSES OVER FREQUENTLY, AND HE IS IN CONTACT THROUGH HIS SUBORDINATES WITH MOST FORMER GENDARMES WHO ARE SITTING IT OUT AT HOME ON BOTH SIDES. HE IS CONFIDENT THAT ALL OF THEM ARE JUST WAITING TO BE CALLED AND WILL RESPOND IMMEDIATELY, BUT THAT IF HE HAD TO SEND THEM OUT WITHOUT PROPER UNIFORMS, THE PEOPLE WOULD NOT TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY.

5. DATT EXPLAINED THAT WHEN BG DAHRUJ HAD MADE SIMILAR REQUEST IN JANUARY, HE WAS ADVISED THAT ANY REQUEST FOR GRANT AID WOULD HAVE TO BE AT GOVT OT GOVT LEVEL, EITHER HERE, BETWEEN PRIMIN AND CHARGE, OR IN WASHINGTON, BETWEEN LEBANESE AMBASSADOR AND STATE DEPT. WHEN SHAAR HIMSELF LATER DISCUSSED MATTER WITH MFORMER DATT IN MARCH, SHAAR INDICATED CHAMOUN WOULD BE PREPARING LETTER WHICH HE WOULD DISCUSS WITH THE CHARGE (SEE REFTEL A), BUT CHAMOUN HAD NOT CONTACTED US. DATT FURTHER EXPLAINED THAT THERE WERE LEGAL PROBLEMS IN GIVING ASSISTANCE TO FOREIGN AGENCIES THAT WERE CHARGED WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT FUNCTIONS AND THAT, IN ANY CASE, PROVISION OF GRANT AID REQUIRED CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL, WHICH WAS TIME-CONSUMING PROCESS. (SEE REFTEL B. AS NEITHER CHAMOUN NOR SHAAR FOLLOWED UP ON MARCH REQUEST, WE HAD NOT PASSED ON TO THEM THAT GRANT AID TO LAW ENFORCEMENT FORCES WAS "IMPOSSIBLE.") SHAAR THEN INTERRUPTED, AND SAID THAT UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, PERHAPS THESE RESTRICTIONS WOULD NOT APPLY, AS ISF'S IMMEDIATE CONFIDENTIAL

CONCERN WOULD BE TO ESTABLISH INTERNAL SECURITY IN BEIRUT AND TO QUELL CIVIL DISTRUBANCESN AND SURELY THIS WAS ALSO IN INTERESTS OF THE U.S.

6. DATT SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS QUESTION OF GRANT AID AT THIS TIME WAS PREMATURE, THAT NO ONE REALLY KNEW WHAT KIND OF SECURITY FORCE WOULD BE NEEDED AFTER WAR WAS OVER AND THAT, IN FACT, WERE U.S. TO

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

PROVIDE THE UNIFORMS, SITUATION WAS STILL SUCH THAT SHAAR COULD NOT GUARANTEE THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE STOLEN NEXT DAY. SHAAR COUNTERED THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION THAT ISF WOULD BE RECONSTITUTED, AND SHORTLY, BUT THAT IT NEEDED HELP NOW TO COUNTER "COMMUNIST" THREAT.

7. DATT SAID HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO PASS ON SHAAR'S REQUEST TO THE CHARGE AND WASHINGTON, BUT THAT HE WAS HIGHLY DOUBTFUL THAT MILITARY ASSISTANCE OF ANY KIND WOULD BE POSSIBLE UNTIL AFTER POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION HAD BEEN REACHED. SHAAR CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT HE WAS READY AT ANY TIME TO ARRANGE MEETING BETWEEN CHARGEE AND PRIMIN KARAME TO FORMALIZE THE REQUEST. (KARAME DID NOT RAISE THIS MATTER IN AUG 9 MEETING WITH CHARGE.)

8. COMMENT: WE DO NOT BELIEVE TIME IS RIPE FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE GRANT. FIRST, IT IS NOT AT ALL CLEAR HOW POLITICAL SITUATION IN LEBANON WILL EVOLVE; SECOND, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THIS APPROACH IS HAPHAZARD AND DIRECTLY RELATED TO JUNBLATT'S ATTEMPT TO MOBILIZE LEFT INTO FUNCTIONAL AREAS OF CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY (AN ATTEMPT THAT IS NOT LIKELY TO SUCCEED IN OUR OPINION), AND IS PROBABLY A SHOT IN THE DARK WITH NO REAL EXPECTATION OF SUCCESS; AND, FINALLY, WE DOUBT THAT SHAAR HAS CLEARED THIS ZREQUEST WITH HIS ERSTWHILE BOSS, CHAMOUN, AS WELL AS KARAME, ALTHOUGH HE USED NAMES OF BOTH MEN.

9. ON OTHER HAND, INTERNAL SECURITY IS CERTAIN TO BE ONE OF PRIMARY STUMBLING BLOCKS FACING PRESIDENT-ELECT SARKIS IN EFFECTIVELY ASSUMING CONTROL OF CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 06875 101400Z

GOVT AND IN IMPLEMENTING WHATEVER REFORM/ RECONCILIATION PROGRAM HE DEVELOPS. THE LONGER IT TAKES FOR LEBANESE FORCES TO ASSUME NATIONAL SECURITY ROLE, THE EASIER IT WILL BE FOR OPPOSITION (AND NON-LEBANESE) ELEMENTS TO SABOTAGE HIS EFFORTS. THEREFORE, WE BELIEVE THAT ONCE SARKIS IS FIRMLY IN CONTROL AND A PROGRAM FOR MILITARY/ISF REORGANIZATION HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, WASHINGTON SHOULD BE PREPARED TO RAPIDLY IMPLEMENT WHATEVER MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IS EVENTUALLY APPROVED. IN THIS REGARD, WE WILL BE SUBMITTING SHORTLY OUR IDEAS ON ONE POSSIBLE PROGRAM, BASED ON OUR PERCEPTION OF SECURITY NEEDS OF LEBANON AFTER THE WAR. WE MAY ALSO NEED TO CONSIDER WHAT POSITION WE SHOULD TAKE REGARDING ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON IF SARKIS DOES NOT

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

ASSUME THE PRESIDENCY SEPT. 23.

10. REGARDING SHAAR'S REQUEST, WE PROPOSE THAT DATT BE AUTHORIZED TO TELL SHAAR THAT USG IS CONCERNED OVER TRAGEDY THAT HAS AFFLICTED LEBANON. WE ARE DEEPLY INTERESTED IN THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND SOVEREIGNTY OF LEBANON AND HOPE THAT PARTIES CONCERNED CAN NEGOTIATE A SOLUTION. ONCE THIS PROCESS IS UNDER WAY, U.S. WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER PROPOSALS PUT FORWARD BY LEBANESE GOVT CONCERNING WAYS IN WHICH WE COULD BE OF ASSISTANCE. AT PRESENT TIME, HOWEVER, WE CANNOT PROVIDE MAP GRANT AID TO LEBANON.

11. PLEASE ADVISE.
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EO Systematic Review
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